

Reborn as a Landlord

Chapter 17: Chapter 10 Steamed Bun_1

"Heh heh, I can't say," Lian Shouyi chuckled, "But rest assured, no matter what, he wouldn't dare neglect us. When we also become master and mistress, we'll buy a few maids to serve us and find wives with bound feet from the city for our sons."

"Dad, I don't want a wife with bound feet from the city, Xiao Yan from Luo Family Village is good enough for me," Lian Erlang, who had awakened at some point, suddenly spoke out. He was seventeen this year, old enough to start thinking of marriage, yet had neither succeeded nor actively pursued anyone.

"That won't do, her family is so poor they clink, her mother is always sickly, and she has a younger brother who is still of tender age. She'll want a hefty dowry and plans to rely on her future son-in-law to take care of her family. We are well off, why marry her? Erlang, don't worry, just wait until your uncle becomes an official, will there still be a lack of fine ladies for you to choose?" Lady He hurriedly said.

"Uncle becoming an official won't happen so quickly," Lian Erlang, seeing he couldn't persuade the two of them, could only turn over and go back to sleep.

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Lian Manman was sleeping in a daze when Lady Zhang and Lian Zhizhi helped her sit up, saying that the medicine had been prepared and that she should take it before going back to sleep. Lian Manman, smelling the strong scent of the herbal concoction, reluctantly opened her eyes and looked down to see a bowl of black medicine soup; the smell was indeed unpleasant.

"Manman, drink it, and you won't have to worry about headaches later," Lian Zhizhi urged.

Lian Manman considered for a moment, aware of her frail health, and resignedly pinched her nose to swallow the medicine. Throughout the process, her eyes were half-closed, not fully awake, and after finishing the medicine, she lay down again.

It was unclear how much time had passed when Lian Manman hazily heard Lian Shouxin and Lady Zhang speaking in hushed voices.

"Imperial Doctor Wang is staying at his graduate brother's home tonight and will return to town tomorrow morning," Lian Shouxin said.

"Then you should go to town to buy medicine tomorrow morning as well," Lady Zhang said. "Did mother give you money for the medicine?"

Lian Shouxin did not reply.

Lady Zhang sighed.

"Imperial Doctor Wang is kind-hearted as a Bodhisattva, but we cannot owe him this favor. Especially for the medicine, he has to buy it with money too. If mother truly won't pay, then I will pawn these two hairpins of mine."

"I'll try asking mother again tomorrow morning," Lian Shouxin said.

Lady Zhang hummed in acknowledgment and turned to look at Lian Manman sleeping there, her eyes reddening once more.

"I've wronged Manman, how could I have been so foolish, taking whatever they said at face value. If anything were to happen to Manman, I wouldn't have the face to live on. They would say I sold my daughter for glory," Lady Zhang whispered through her tears.

"Nonsense," Lian Shouxin's voice was somewhat stifled, "Manman is alive and well... The matter with Manman, mother... big brother and sister-in-law, they also... didn't do it on purpose." He ultimately left the words "didn't do it on purpose" unsaid.

"They are your own siblings, you understand in your heart what's best. Over these years, we work at the forefront, eat and drink at the back, mother's word is law, and I've never complained. But now, if Manman hadn't spoken up, I'd still be a fool. Just thinking about it, my heart feels as if it's been doused with a pail of cold water," Lady Zhang said, transitioning from quiet sobbing to outright weeping, and fearing she might wake up the children, she covered her mouth with the corner of the quilt, "And in the end, Manman was almost killed by me..."

"I know," Lian Shouxin said in a subdued voice, Lady Zhou had said the same to him.

"Dad, I don't ask for much, only that Huahua marries well, if big brother's family gets to be officials, that's their fortune, I don't aspire to partake in their glory, I just want the kids to live safely and healthily, with our fields providing enough not to lack food or drink, that's all I wish for in this life."

"Mm," Lian Shouxin nodded, "Big brother's business is dad's ambition for this lifetime, as his son and brother, I'll help however I can, this time... I, I regret it too."

Lian Shouxin held his head in his hands.

"Then for future matters..." Lady Zhang looked up and asked Lian Shouxin.

Lian Shouxin remained silent.

"I'm not a good daughter-in-law," Lady Zhang pulled the quilt up to her chest, "I've thought it over, and I would rather bear the name of being unfilial. If something like this happens again, I won't agree. If we need to get money, they can take me."

Lian Shouxin sighed, turned around, and enveloped Lady Zhang in his embrace. No one knew better than he what kind of person Lady Zhang was. He had seen firsthand her sacrifices and the injustices she had endured for the Lian Family over the years.

"Even if I, Lian Shouxin, am not capable of much, I would not sell my wife and children."

Lian Manman, in her dazed state, heard Lian Shouxin's words and was about to secretly cheer, when she heard him continue:

"If something like this happens again, the one to be sold would be me... At worst, I would go work in the salt pans..."

"That's going to get oneself killed..."

Lian Manman almost choked on her own blood. Thinking of the events that had taken place that day, she suddenly realized that Lian Shouxin and Lady Zhang were the kind of 'foolishly filial' dunces you hear about in tales.

Life was already hard enough as it was, and with parents who were dunces, how was one supposed to live?

Lian Manman silently questioned the heavens.

Of course, the heavens would not pay attention to Lian Manman. She could only figure out a solution by herself.

If she wanted to live a good life in the future, she first needed to transform these two big dunces, Lian Shouxin and Lady Zhang. It wasn't about turning dunces into smart people, but at least she had to prevent them from continuing their foolish filial conduct.

Upon reflection, she recognized that though the couple might be dunces, they still had their virtues. She could see that they deeply loved their children. They lacked principles when it came to treating their parents and children, clearly tipping the scales in favor of the parents, but deep down, they still understood reason. Moreover, between themselves and their children, they would rather suffer themselves to protect their offspring.

Furthermore, regarding the situation with Lian Manman, they were oppressed by the obligation to be filial, not driven by greed. Had it been greed, there would be no hope left.

Overall, this couple still had the potential to be reformed. However, how to reform them was not an easy task. Fortunately for her, the situation with Lian Manman had provided an opportunity. The couple were already wavering in

their foolishly filial ways, and they felt deep guilt towards Lian Manman. She could use that to her advantage.

Lian Manman clenched her fist in secret, "The first step to a happy life, watch how I'll reform these dunces!"

"Father, Manman is talking in her sleep," Lady Zhang whispered.

It turned out that Lian Manman had accidentally spoken aloud without realizing it.

"She seems to be talking about... dunces," Lian Shouxin heard it too.

"Manman is craving dumplings," Lady Zhang sighed, "Tomorrow I wanted to ask mother for an egg to give to Manman to eat, not sure if she would even agree. Dumplings, that's even more unlikely."

"How about I ask father?" said Lian Shouxin.

"Father might agree, but all the eggs are in mother's hands. When the time comes, mother will become angry, and we still don't know when today's anger will be settled. Add another cause for anger, and our lives would become even more difficult," said Lady Zhang.

"Then what should we do? Imperial Doctor Wang said the child is weak and needs to be well looked after," said Lian Shouxin.

"What else can we do," Lady Zhang's voice carried a trace of desolation, "I will go plead with mother. Even if she scolds me for being greedy, I'll accept it."

"... Mother is like that, her, her heart isn't bad," Lian Shouxin said in a subdued voice.

Lady Zhang sighed deeply and said no more.

Lian Manman slept through the night. The following morning, she woke up to the sound of Lady Zhou's scolding.